

The HARPSICHORD

***E. POWER BIGGS and
his Challis Harpsichord***



AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 1973

THE HARPSICHORD

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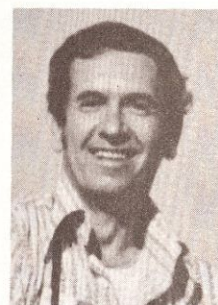
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GO FOR BAROQUE

by *Hal Haney*



I have a feeling this column might end up being longer than usual. And if it does, I hope you will forgive me. I can't help it. I have just returned from the

Harpsichord Festival held on the campus of Westminster Choir College, Princeton, N.J. (In fact, I have not yet returned since I am writing this on the plane home.)

Let me begin by telling you just a little about the atmosphere and surroundings. There were no newspapers, no radios, no telephones, no televisions, no buses, no factory whistles, and no traffic noise. The only sounds to be heard were the songs of birds early in the morning and evening and the sounds of harpsichords, choirs and an occasional organ. It was heaven. The Westminster Choir College is a perfect jewel of an intimate college located on a small, beautifully planned campus in Princeton, New Jersey (a short drive from either Newark or New York City.) Its buildings are architecturally beautiful in the fashion of Williamsburg, Virginia. All activity was centered around a grassy quadrangle which is lined with herringbone brick walks and mature dogwood trees. It was so quiet and peaceful that the campus cat "Stubby" could, and did, sleep undisturbed anywhere on the grounds. During breakfast, lunch and dinner he was on duty at the cafeteria door knowing that kind-hearted students would save something for him, and his impressive girth indicated that his plan worked.

The entire festival was under the direction of Dr. Frances Cole who set the tone of the week when she opened the first program with the words "Call

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me Fran." From that moment on her personality permeated every event. Her good humor and concern for the comfort and happiness of every artist and participant spread throughout the campus and everyone followed her lead. I will only be able to highlight what took place during these six days but future issues of *The Harpsichord* will carry articles featuring specific workshops and lectures.

Fran Cole played the first formal recital with works by Bach, Couperin, Scarlatti and Rameau. She played her own transcriptions of works by Bartok and American black composers Nathaniel Dett and Howard Swanson.

Ralph Kirkpatrick played 18 late sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. Sylvia Marlowe played Purcell, Couperin and several 20th century composers. Igor Kipnis played the entire Goldberg Variations using his new 10-foot long harpsichord built by Rutkowski and Robinette. Blanche Winogron presented virginal music of the 16th and 17th century.

We all had the opportunity to meet and talk with these famous artists since they all held informal classes the morning following their formal recital. The lecture was held "in the round" where questions and answers flowed freely until lunch time forced us to get in and out of the cafeteria in time to participate in the afternoon program.

Kirkpatrick told us about his current approach to Scarlatti and how his theories and opinions have developed through the past 40 years. Fran Cole spoke on performance practices and presented a half-hour film on Landowska. Sylvia Marlowe talked on ornamentation and illustrated 20 examples of ornamentation which are found in early French music. She demonstrated each of these on her Challis clavichord. Kipnis gave a superb talk on Bach ornamentation and illustrated these by playing tapes of various musical performances of the same phrases by different artists. Blanche Winogron gave us the "why" of Elizabethan music as well as the "how". Paul Maynard, former member

and director of the New York Pro Musica assembled a group of talented musicians playing cello, oboe, flute, harpsichord, and a singer, to demonstrate the use of the harpsichord as continuo. What a delightful learning experience these sessions were!

The physical aspects of the harpsichord and harpsichord building was covered by the greatest array of building talent ever assembled in one place at one time. This included John Challis, William Dowd, Zeidler and Quagliata, Christopher Bannister, Eric Herz, Howard Everngam, Knight Vernon, Ed Buecher, Richard Earle and a number of semi-professional builders. This active session brought out opinions and studies on key balancing points, soundboard construction, bracing, materials, harpsichord maintenance and harpsichord kits.

A more detailed report on each of the sessions will be covered in future issues.

A special treat was the appearance of Eubie Blake the highly gifted jazz musician. He played several of his own compositions, including the Charleston Rag which he composed in 1899. His tales of the music world at the turn of the century brought this past jazz era vividly into focus and his dexterity at the harpsichord shed a new light on the instrument. Slam Stewart, one of the world's foremost jazz bass players teamed up with Fran Cole to play a variation on one of his compositions "Flat Foot Floogie with a Floy Floy". There were chamber concerts featuring Eric Herz on the flute; music for 1, 2, 3 and 4 harpsichords; poets reading to harpsichord music and Purcell opera arias with harpsichord. There were also very contemporary and very beautifully played compositions for violin and harpsichord.

As one might guess, we were soon dubbed "the harpsichord people" by other students on the campus. "Are you harpsichord?" was an often asked opening question.

While I only left the campus of Westminster Choir College minutes ago, it's difficult to immediately recall

all the activities which took place. I haven't even mentioned the garden receptions every night after each recital which took place on the quadrangle or the special outdoor early dinner which started with champagne and ended with chilled mellow and had a 40-foot hot and cold buffet table inbetween. Then there were the student recitals which were scheduled between other activities and the informal discussions which started at the after concert receptions and usually lasted until well after midnight. These talk sessions covered every phase of harpsichord playing, building, buying, tuning as well as music interpretation, reading, editing and always, embellishment.

From eight in the morning until eight in the evening a special room was open which contained the largest selection of modern harpsichords I have ever seen at one place. All instruments were available to all "harpsichord people" to play anything at any time. No signing up and no assignment of instruments. This gave everyone the rare chance to compare instruments by playing them as long and as often as one wanted. My mind is still somewhat boggled by it all, but I personally remember playing a Leg of Mutton spinet by C. F. Bannister; a very large single manual 2x8'x4' by Bannister; a 2x8'x4' by Challis; an 1885 Christopher Quner 2x8'x4' which was rebuilt by Challis; a virginal by Johannes Morley; an 8'x4' spinet by de Angeli; a 2x8'x4' by Rubio, a 2x8'x16'x4' by Herz; a clavichord by Rindlisbacher of Zurick, Switzerland; the Bruchner spinet shown on page 89 of Zuckermann's book "The Modern Harpsichord"; a very large and beautifully cased 2x8'x4' by Zeidler and Quagliata of Flemington, New Jersey; a Zuckermann 6' kit instrument; an early Zuckermann kit and even a Baldwin electronically amplified harpsichord. The new Zuckermann Flemish III kit was shown under construction as was a Herz kit. I may have missed some instruments but the above list gives you a general idea of what was available.

Many I.H.S. members attended and while I can't name them all, it was a great pleasure for me to be able to meet (many for the first time) Alan Bostrom, our only member from Oswego, New York; Nancy Curran, West Hartford, Conn.; Richard Earle, Center Conway, New Hampshire; Knight Vernon, Constantine, Michigan; Alan Caro, Newport News, Virginia, who extended many kindnesses; Richard Cox, Silver Spring, Md.; Dr. Renate McLaughlin, Lennon, Michigan; Jean Theobald, Washington, D. C.; Bob Bisey, Seaford, N. Y.; Tina Emra, Princeton, N. J.; Mrs. Donald Fenner, Herkimer, N. Y.; Don Green, Coventry, Rhode Island; Betty Lumby, Alabama; Harry Wells, Missouri; Ed Brewer, New York City and Andrew DeMasi of the Bronx, New York. It was a special pleasure to meet Dr. Peter Wright, Dean of Westminster Choir College who is one of our Charter members. Added to this list of members who were present are Dr. Francis Cole, John Challis, Eric Herz, William Dowd and Igor Kipnis. I am depending on my memory and scribbles for these names so I have probably left out some of our most active members. Please forgive.

I can honestly say that the Westminster Choir College Harpsichord Festival was the most educational, productive, entertaining and musically satisfying six days I have ever spent. The harpsichord world owes a great debt of thanks to Fran Cole who conceived this idea a number of years ago and worked tirelessly to bring it together. She selected the finest talent in the harpsichord world and did the incredibly difficult job of juggling schedules to make it possible for us to hear and meet all these artists during an all-too-brief period of six days. She was always the very first person to appear on the scene early in the morning and was there to say "Good Night" to the last tired delegate. I was especially impressed with the way she was able to solve the countless problems which arise during such an undertaking. She was a genius when it came to handling all the different idiosyncrasies which the

performing artists brought with them. One player wanted no airconditioning in the hall, another wanted as much airconditioning as possible. One artist insisted that their lecture was not to be recorded while another artist wouldn't start until recording equipment was in place. One artist insisted that the bench was too low and another artist thought that the bench was not low enough and wanted the harpsichord raised! (It was finally propped up on books.) She handled all these problems smoothly, easily and with great diplomacy. On top of this she had her own recitals and lectures to do and even played violin for the Bach harpsichord concerto. I have always believed in angels, but now I have my own very special angel and her name is Francis Cole.

Much credit must also go to Charles Schisler; Director of the Summer School Program. Somehow, he was able to coordinate not only the Harpsichord Festival, but a Rodger Wagner Chorale Workshop, an Orf Workshop, two summer highschool music camps, a Children's Choir Workshop, plus dozens of concerts and recitals by these groups all being held on this beautiful little campus. He extended to me and the Harpsichord magazine many courtesies for which he receives my deepest thanks. Westminster Choir College can well be proud of Charles Schisler, a talented musician, educator and administrator. Earl Cunningham, Director of Public Relations was especially helpful in setting up interviews and getting detailed information to me.

Plans are already in the works for next year's festival and I will get information to you just as soon as the dates are set so you can plan to attend. This year's Festival was an experience I will remember for a lifetime. I sincerely hope you will be able to say that next year.

Hal Haney

SYMPATHETIC VIBRATIONS

Calling All Little Olde Bonemakers

By Wallace Zuckermann



With ivory increasingly difficult to get and woefully expensive, another look has to be taken at bone for covering keyboards. This is the material favored by many of

the old harpsichord makers, including Ruckers. It looks quite a bit like ivory, but hasn't got ivory's grain, and is more open-pored, sometimes absorbing dirt or black spots into its pores which make it look flecked. In some ways it is prettier than ivory and certainly feels much nicer than plastic.

The problem with bone is not its supply, but the process of turning it into usable pieces. Dropping into Dowd's shop in Paris the other day, I was chatting with the works manager, Willard Martin, who himself used to make bone covers but is now happy to get them made by an old French peasant.

The bone comes from beef cattle, and the only one bone, the shin bone, is thick enough to use. The supply is no problem, since any wholesale meat dealer will practically give them away (canned soups are the only big customers for bone.) Once you have a large container (garbage can sized) full of shin bones, the fun really starts. The bones have to be boiled over a hot fire for six to eight hours until all the grease is boiled out of them. Usually ammonia is added to help the process. It is advisable to do this outdoors, as the stench is nearly unbearable.

Once the bones are greasefree, they have to be machined. Willard Martin sanded them on one side to

have a straight surface for bearing against a fence, but he pointed out that there must be many better ways to do it. Probably a band saw such as used by the butchers themselves could cut the bones in half and result in a reasonably flat surface. For production, a jig could be made to take irregularly shaped objects which could ride in a guided carriage. Mr. Martin reports that his blades heated up, and that he finally cut the bones when they were thoroughly soaked. However, it should be possible, by a combination of running speed and type of sawblade, to find a way to cut them with a minimum of friction.

One garbage can sized container might yield enough to cover sharps on twenty keyboards, so here is an idea for someone who wants to start a little crafts business. All you need is a garbage can, some shin bones, a good deal of skill, and an insensitive nose.

Wallace Zuckermann
Devon, England

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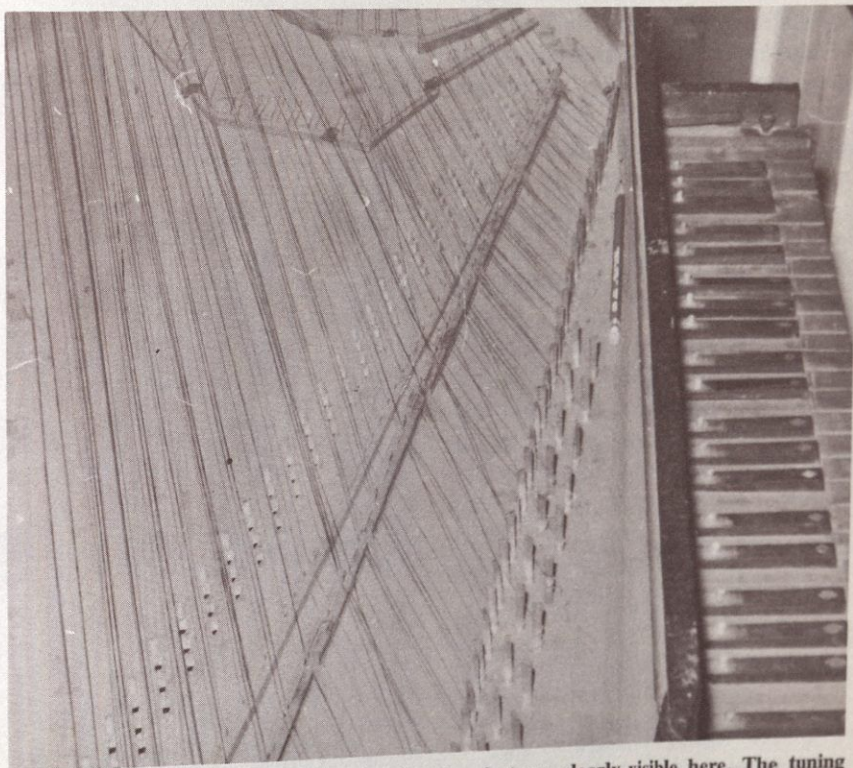
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New Photos of Smithsonian Instrument

Volume VI, No. 1, 1973 of *The Harpsichord* featured a remarkable transverse harpsichord in the Smithsonian collection. Since publishing that article, we have examined the instrument personally and took a number of close-up photos which may be interesting to those reproducing the instrument. Below are two of them.



The soundboard slots through which the jacks project are clearly visible here. The tuning pin arrangement is also easy to follow.



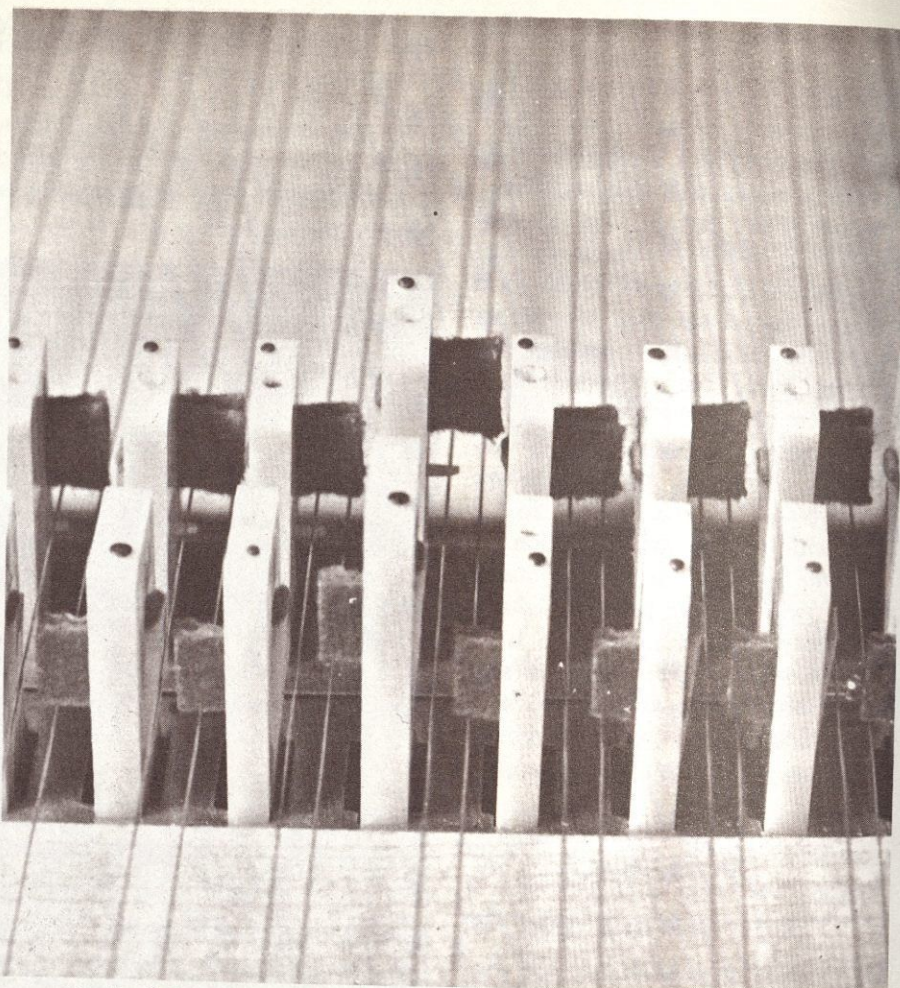
Scott Odell, Restorer for Smithsonian Division of Musical Instruments is shown operating the shove coupler which permits 8' or 4' and 8' or 4' to be played.

The Harpsichord — 5

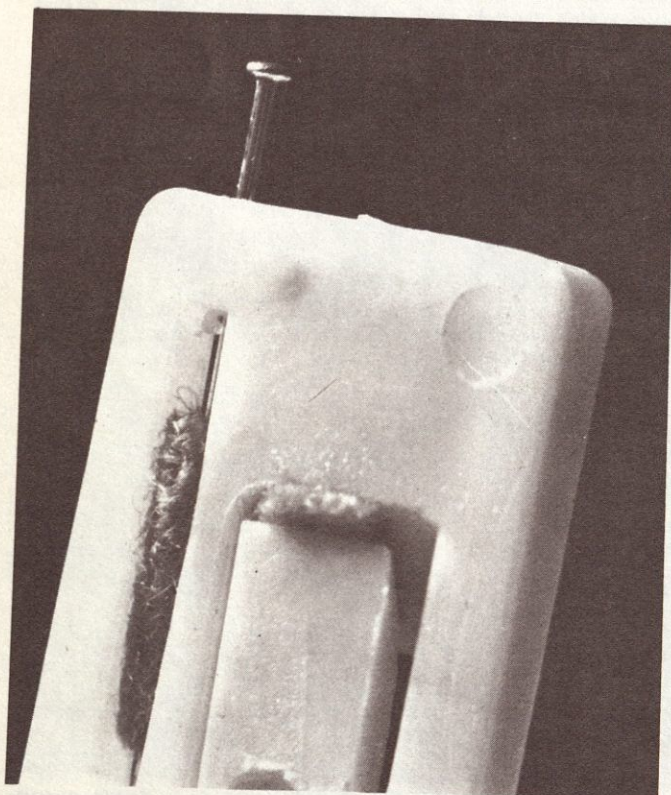
UNIQUE SYSTEM KEEPS JACK DAMPER FELTS IN PLACE

After building my harpsichord from a Zuckermann kit, I was annoyed at having to adjust the damper felts very frequently. The problem was that there was not sufficient friction between the felt and the sides of the slot holding it. I solved this problem by drilling down from the top of each jack, through the slot and into the bottom of the slot with a No. 60 drill (0.025" diameter) and inserting an ordinary straight pin (0.025" diameter) as shown in the photograph. The felt is crimped with pliers at the fold and the pin goes down along the fold and is secured top and bottom by the holes drilled in the jack. The felt is then trimmed slightly so it doesn't hang too far over the string. I've rarely needed to adjust a felt in the two years I've been using this modification.

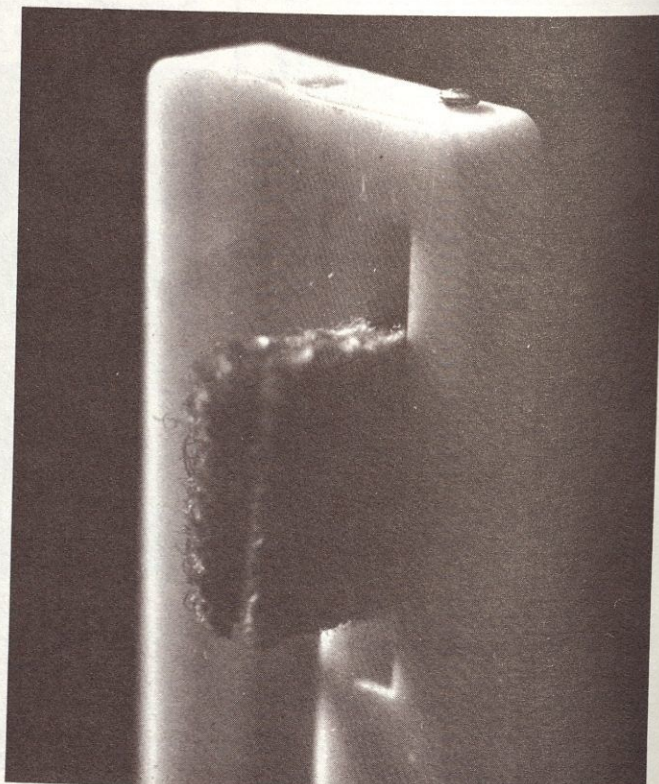
R. C. Nicklin
Department of Physics
Appalachian State University
Boone, North Carolina



Overhead view showing felt "civilizer" pins in place on a two choir instrument.



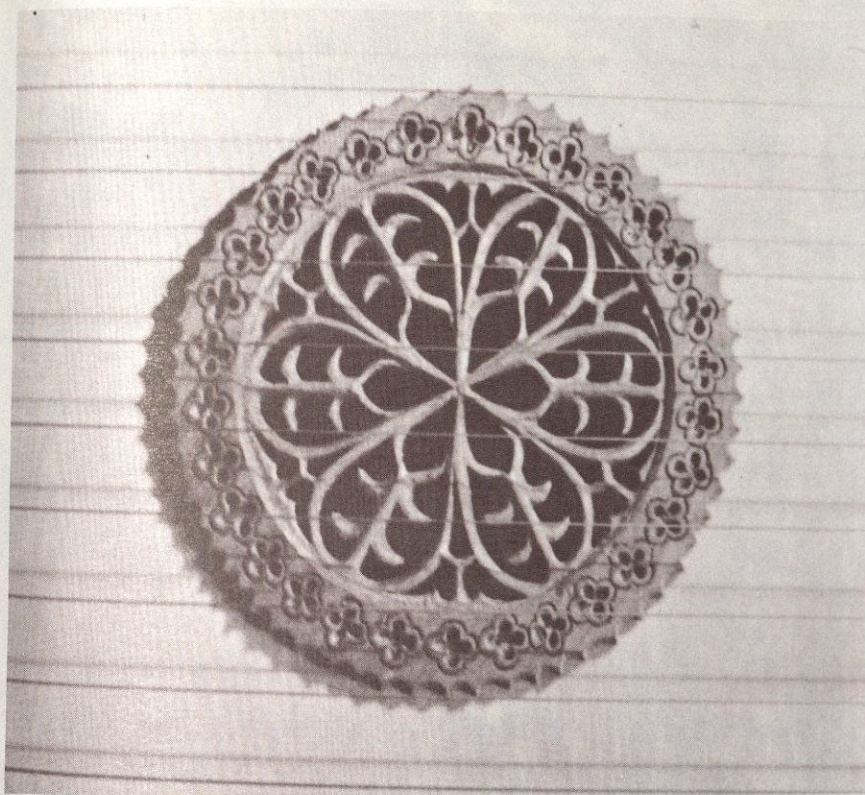
Back view of jack showing pin being inserted through the fold in damper felt.



3/4 view of front of jack showing both pin and felt in place.

THE SUBJECT IS ROSES

by Richard Ian Kelley



— The photograph illustrates a rose I recently carved for a Zuckermann harpsichord. The design is not taken from any particular model but rather is the result of an hour or so of sketching together common motifs of Renaissance and Baroque architecture. Because the rose was carved in cherry, the design is a compromise between detail and feasibility of execution.

While planning the rose, I ran into an interesting tool, the grobet, which greatly facilitated the carvings and which might be useful to other builders who plan to add ornate roses or trimming to their instruments. Although grobets are generally made for engraving jewelry metals, most of the available styles are easily adaptable to fine woodwork. The tool is awl-shaped and about four to five inches long. The round maple head is cradled in the palm for pressure control while the thumb and first two fingers guide the tip of the steel shaft. The cutting edges vary from about 3/16 of an inch down to a pinpoint, come in chisels, gouges, and various triangular shapes, and keep their sharpness beautifully.

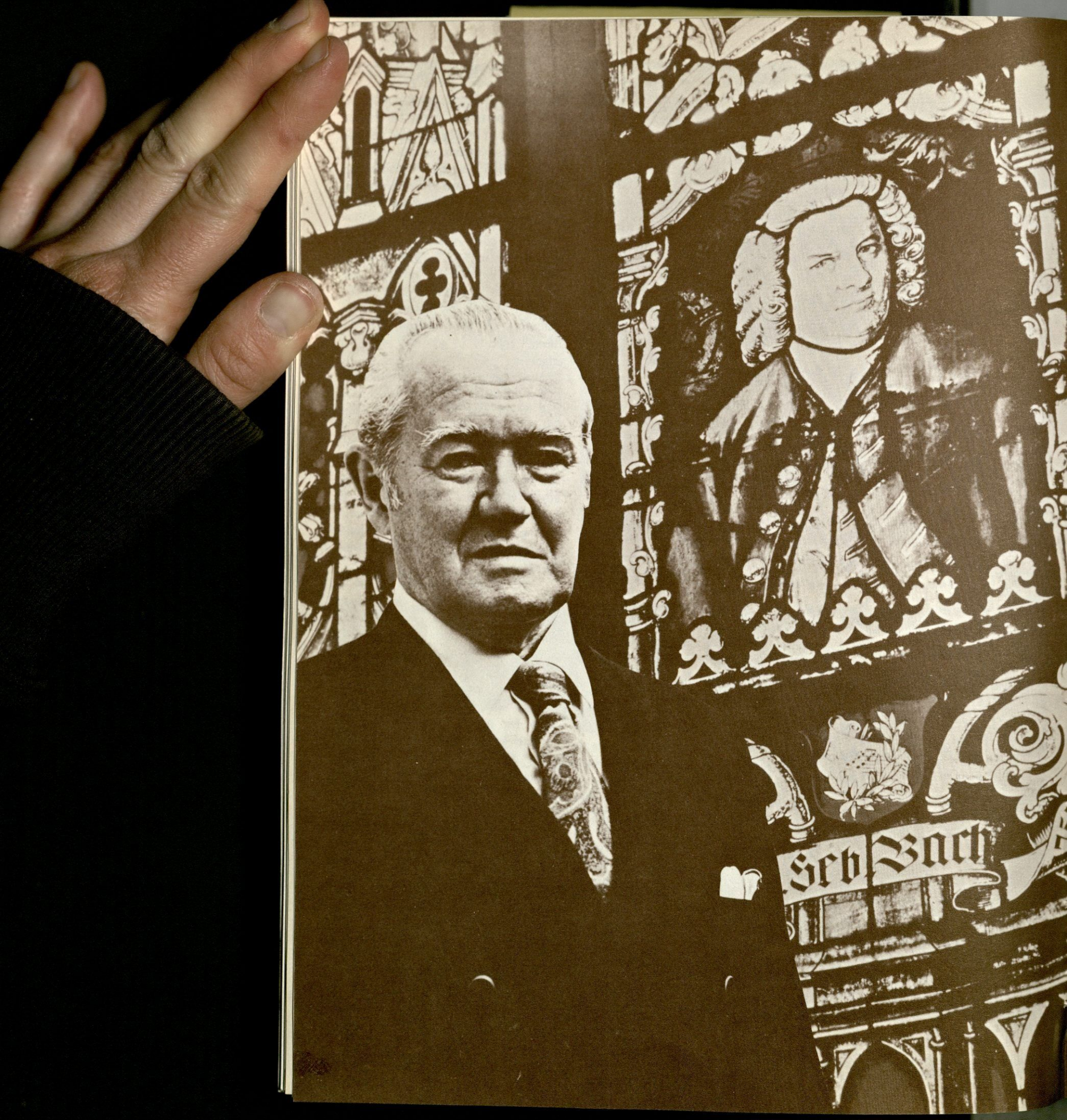
HINTS

Real antique tuning pins are very difficult to locate and equally difficult to make. John Lyon, Novi, Michigan, has an easy solution for builders or harpsichord buffs who want to eliminate the glitter of a chrome plated pin yet can not locate a source of supply for anything other than chrome plated pins. Local heat treating companies can treat the chrome pins you now have with black oxide which puts a smooth, protective, dull black finish on your pins at a cost of about \$3 per set. This treatment protects the pin from rust as well as giving it an antique look. To find the outfit in your area doing this work, look under the classification "Heat Treating — Metals," in the yellow pages of your local telephone directory.

If you must replace one string and have to back a tuning pin out of the wrest plank, this is easily done with a tuning wrench. It takes very little time since only one pin is involved. However, if you must remove all the tuning pins on a large instrument, or perhaps one full choir of pins, you are faced with a lengthy, time consuming job. Gaylord C. Wright of Regina, Saskatchewan, has come up with a solution to that problem. In his column "Piano Technology Illustrated" which appears regularly in the Piano Technician's Journal, he suggests using an electric drill with a reversing switch. He takes a regular star tip tuning wrench, cuts the shank between the tip and the bent section, and grinds the shank into a triangular shape. This assures a non-slip fit in the drill chuck. It is then an easy matter to back off each pin by using the low speed of the drill. If a reversible electric drill is not available you might want to grind the shank to fit a standard carpenter's brace which works equally well. ☺

At Waple's Jewelers Supply in Philadelphia I bought a selection of ten grobets for only seven dollars. The only other tool I used was a good surgical scalpel. After laying a smooth piece of cherry into sixths, I gingerly started cutting into the somewhat friable wood and proceeded chip by chip for many hours. (A drill and exacto knife might have been faster in a different wood, but there is always more satisfaction in carving a rose rather than cutting out a design.) Since the rose was actually carved from a rectangular piece of wood screwed down to a heavy maple lap-board, the final step was to cut out the circular design and form a serrated edge in the process.

After a light oiling and undercutting beneath quatrefoils, the rose was glued into the soundboard with the quatrefoil perimeter supporting the lower cut center design. It seems to blend in well with our otherwise simple harpsichord. ☺





CONVERSATION

with

E. POWER BIGGS

I honestly can't remember the first time I heard of E. Power Biggs. I'm sure I was enjoying his organ playing long before I was conscious of the man. It seems that whenever I heard organ music which I enjoyed, it was almost always played by E. Power Biggs. Conversely, when I heard organ music played which I did not enjoy, it was never played by E. Power Biggs. Fortunately, Biggs kept turning up with increasing frequency until today a "good music" station in Denver plays a Biggs recording at least once during every broadcast day. A Denver daily newspaper recently indicated that the average man on the street should know the name E. Power Biggs and if he didn't, his cultural development had somehow been stunted. To me, it seems as though there has always been an E. Power Biggs. His devotion to fine music is legendary and his dedication to the organ has, in the words of the New York Times, "created a renaissance of interest in great organ music."

Now then, we have established his importance in the field of organ music, which is hardly necessary, but what about the harpsichord?

E. Power Biggs was the first artist to record the pedal harpsichord and he has written a number of articles about the harpsichord. One of these appeared in Volume III No. 3 of this journal. Included in his list of Columbia recordings of the pedal harpsichord are the Bach Trio Sonatas, 1 through 6, and the G Concerto and A Minor Concerto which are available in two volumes. His Columbia album "Bach on the Pedal Harpsichord" includes the Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor; Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor; Toccata and Fugue in D Minor and other Bach favorites. His "Holiday for Harpsichord" album is a romp on 19th-century favorites including Beethoven, Schubert, Mozart, etc.

When I learned that Dr. Biggs was going to be giving several recitals and master classes at Colorado State University in Fort Collins on their new Casavant tracker organ, I wrote to him and he graciously consented to an interview. Despite the fact that he had given two very long and demanding concerts the day before (one at 4 p.m. and another at 8 p.m.) he was up and waiting for me when I drove into his driveway the following morning.

I was surprised by his youthfulness. I guess I just assumed that a man so internationally established in the music world had to be old. I couldn't have been more wrong. His enthusiasm for his work and his two instruments, the organ and harpsichord, was contagious. He speaks with a delightful British accent and he possesses a wonderful mixture of both British and American humor which he uses easily and often.

The interview took place in his ground floor room across the street from the University. Large stacks of music were piled on a desk and lamp table and a volume of Emerson poetry lie opened on an easy chair. While the harpsichord occupies a more recent part of his career, I wanted to know what led up to it so I asked him if his parents were musicians.

E. POWER BIGGS: No. My father was an architect and my mother loved music but was not a professional musician in any way.

HANEY: *When you were a young child, did you have much music in your home?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Not a great deal.

HANEY: *Can you recall how your interest in music developed? Were you very young?*

E. POWER BIGGS: No. You can't be an infant protege on the organ

because you can't reach the pedals. I recall the wonderful story of Mozart who went touring with his father who was exploiting him at the age of eight or nine. He went to the organ in some little Austrian town and Mozart walked on the pedals because he couldn't sit on the bench and still reach them. As he walked on the pedals he held up his hands to the manuals and played that way. Well, I can't claim anything like that. Far from it.

HANEY: *Did you start with the piano?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Yes, I started with the piano at 10 or 11 as everyone does. But then I dropped out of that and went into electrical engineering and I studied that for about three years. At that time I became interested in the organ and I used to practice in the evenings. At age 18 or 19, just by luck actually, I won a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music in London. You see, I was born in England. I now had a choice to make.

Would it be engineering or music?

The music scholarship would assure me four years of excellent study, so I made the break and went into music. But, you see, that was at a comparatively late age.

HANEY: *Did your interest in organ start with hearing the instrument often when you were young?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Well, I was born in Westcliff-on-Sea, near London, then went to live on the Isle of Wight, and then back to London, but I went to boarding school when I was eight or nine. It was a Church of England school, so I sang in the choir, of course. I was exposed to music and the organ early, but I don't know whether it took . . . that is, the church routine. I really don't think that interested me as much as hearing people play in London and feeling that I would like to work at that too.

(Continued on page 12)

HARPISICHORD of NOTE

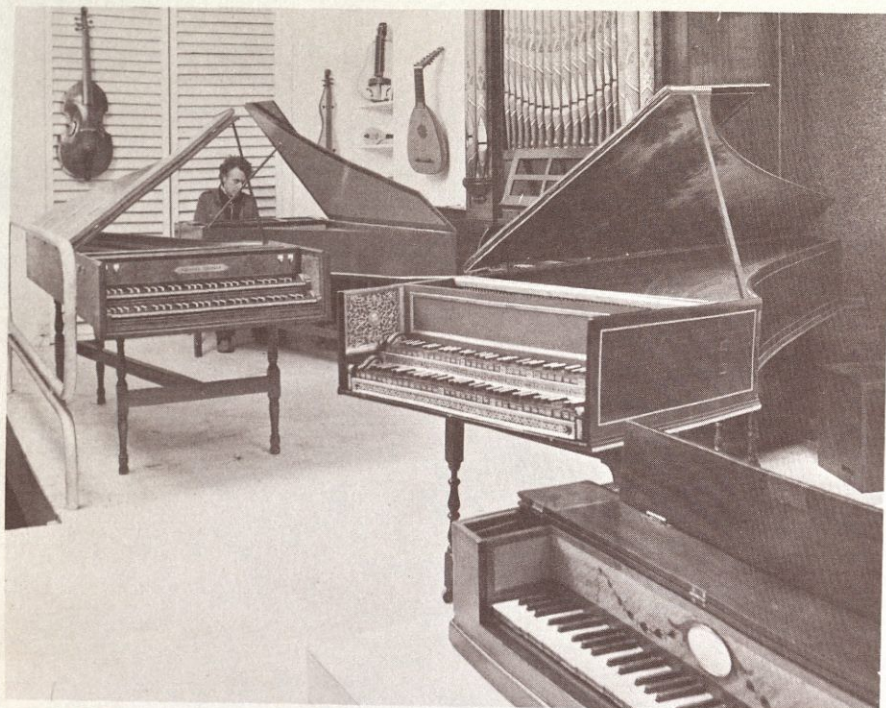




LONDON HARPSICHORD CENTRE

The seven instruments illustrated here, all located in the London Harpsichord Centre, left to right are 1, English Virginals; 2, Sebastian Garnier, 1747; 3, Ruckers copy as extended in France; 4, Sebastian Erard; 5, Italian Organ; 6, 1623 English double; 7, Shudi copy (in background); 8, clavichord.

Photo Merlin Turville-Petre
London, England



Michael Thomas is shown with the following instruments, left to right: 1, Hitchcock copy; 2, Ruckers copy; 3, Father Smith Organ; 4, Large Ruckers extended in France; 5, Longman & Broderip piano.

Harpsichord Centre

By Thomas McGeary

One of the focal points for harpsichord activity in England is the Harpsichord Centre, located near London's famous Baker Street. This unique shop sells a wide variety of musical instruments. This includes restored historical harpsichords, organs, clavichords, early square pianos, custom made modern instruments, kits, parts, records, music, rentals and lessons. It also carries many other historical instruments including lutes, recorders, wooden flutes, shawms, etc. One of the fascinating features of the shop is the rotating exhibit of historical instruments from the collection of Michael Thomas.

The Harpsichord Center is owned and operated by Michael Thomas and Janine Jackson. Thomas has been an active and colorful figure on England's harpsichord scene for twenty years. In addition to building keyboard instruments in the classical tradition he is an accomplished performer giving frequent recitals, broadcasting for the B.B.C. and making records.

Currently Thomas is producing

a large number of French-style doubles with cases of pine. These instruments are based on a large French extended-Ruckers from his collection. He also builds various Italian singles, clavichords, and copies of the V & A Hitchcock and of Schudi-Broadwoods. We are told these instruments are made with thin cases of appropriate solid wood, thinnest possible soundboards and light stringing. Finishes include natural wood, veneered, or painted with gilt panels and Ruckers-type printed papers.

In addition to handling its own line of keyboard instruments and kits, the Harpsichord Centre serves as an outlet for numerous smaller workshops in England. Current craftsmen associated with the Centre include Peter Wilder who helps make veneered and paneled Hitchcock copies; Trevor Breckerleg; organ builder Alan Whear; organ builder/restorers Keith Theobald and John Bowen; lute builders Ian Harwood and John Isaacs, and Clifford West who does restoration work.

An interesting aspect of the Harpsichord Centre's activities has been the recent sponsorship of a series

of recitals on various historical harpsichord and organs from the Thomas collection. The recitals have featured many established as well as young harpsichordists in England. Among the performers have been Lady Susi Jeans, Gillian Wier, Bill Christie, Ian Harwood and Michael Thomas. This past summer, the series amounted to a mini-festival of French harpsichord music. The favored instrument of the performers was a 1749 double by the French Builder Garnier. Garnier's father was a close friend of Couperin, and for that reason, many of the performers chose this instrument for their presentation of French music. Future plans include an expansion of these activities as well as a series of lessons and workshops on the use of old instruments. Society members are invited to write to the Harpsichord Centre, 47 Chiltern Street London, W.1, England for further details on future activities, visiting hours etc. ☺

CONVERSATION . . .

(continued from page 9)

HANEY: *Did the mechanics of the instrument intrigue you at all?*

E. POWER BIGGS: That came at a much later time, although I was interested in engineering. This was mechanical electrical engineering.

After I graduated from the Academy, I traveled to America for a number of very, very small concerts which were arranged through a Welshman for me.

I went all around and played in a lot of very small places. Moskogie, Bowie, Texas and places like that. On one occasion, I played for two people during a blizzard in the middle of Kansas. There were concerts in little Methodist churches and so on. Then I returned to England, but I had the feeling that I must go back to America and live there.

So I did it. I came to America on speculation, so to speak. I had just about enough to live on for a little while and went to call on Dr. Tertius Noble. He used to be the organist at St. Thomas in New York. He was quite famous in his day but he died I believe about 15 or so years

ago. He was kind enough to speak for me for a job in Newport, Rhode Island, so I went there.

They thought since I was Church of England educated and all that, that I knew all there was to know about boys' choir. Well, I did and I didn't.

I have no real feeling for them. I like to listen to them, but I like other people to do the work. I was in Newport for a year when I had the opportunity to go to Christ Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which is the beautiful Episcopal Church on the Common. This was built by the British before the revolution. It was where George Washington took command of the Continental Army before they threw the British out. There is even a bullet hole from the revolution in the front door. They got me to go to Cambridge, I suppose, thinking also that I knew all about boys' choirs. An interesting thing happened after about a year and a half with this church.

I got fired.

This was the best thing that ever happened to me. I simply stayed in Cambridge and Dr. Archibald Davidson was also very generous to me. I was in one of his classes. Looking back now, I believe one can look back to everything that happened to you in life and see where it was important to your career in one way or another. One can say that this chap did the generous thing. He did this. He was kind enough to do that. I always tell students that if they get fired from a job, it can be the best thing that happens to them. Anyhow, the rector fired me. He fired everyone. The secretary. The janitor. Everyone. As a matter of fact, he was fired just shortly after that!

When I went to tell Tertius Noble that I had been fired, he said "Don't worry about that. In my opinion the clergy is made up of 95% scoundrels but the other 5% are very fine gentlemen."

My big opportunity then came through the radio when I played the organ in the Busch-Reisinger Museum. That was back in 1942.

HANEY: How were you selected to

play radio concerts over someone else?

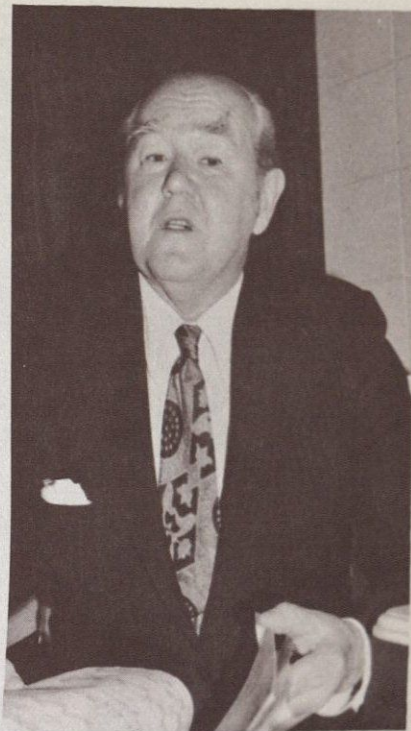
E. POWER BIGGS: Well, there someone else comes in. You know Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. She put me on at the Library of Congress. They had a wretched little organ there. She was very active in music and commissioned certain works. Walter Piston wrote a piece for violin, viola, and organ, an unlikely combination. I played the organ part. Then I played some other things also, but this happened just at the right time since that was carried by Columbia Broadcasting System Radio network. They heard me and hired me for a series of radio broadcasts. And from that one thing led to another.

From that point on, I existed as a free lance organist with concerts and then recordings. It was just good luck. That is all. Getting fired was part of it.

Now about the mechanics of the organ. I didn't really become interested in this until I started going back to Europe after the war. The first organs I played in England were just conventional church instruments with electropneumatic action with all its faults and shortcomings. When I returned to Europe I came up against all these wonderful historic organs. Some of them were built in the time of Bach and some as early as 1319. I then began to realize the organ as it was made for hundreds of years. That is: The Organ. That is: its identity. It's a pity that Benjamin Franklin flew his kite because if he hadn't perhaps we would never have discovered electricity. You see, the harpsichord never had that problem. Well, perhaps it has to a limited extent today with the electronic harpsichord, but that is laughable. It hasn't affected the basic instrument. While on the other hand, people grabbed hold of little pneumatic bellows and electric magnets and they ruined the organ. They removed its sensitive identity.

HANEY: It became an impersonal instrument?

E. POWER BIGGS: Exactly. You play a key and you make a contact and the magnet does its work, just like Morse code. Well, no harpsi-



chordist would put up with that. No other musician would put up with it, yet organists do all the time.

My first interest in the organ was purely musical. During the war Europe was off bounds. So it was after that that I saw the light, when I had the opportunity to go all around Europe playing these magnificent instruments.

HANEY: When you were studying music did the harpsichord often enter your field of interest?

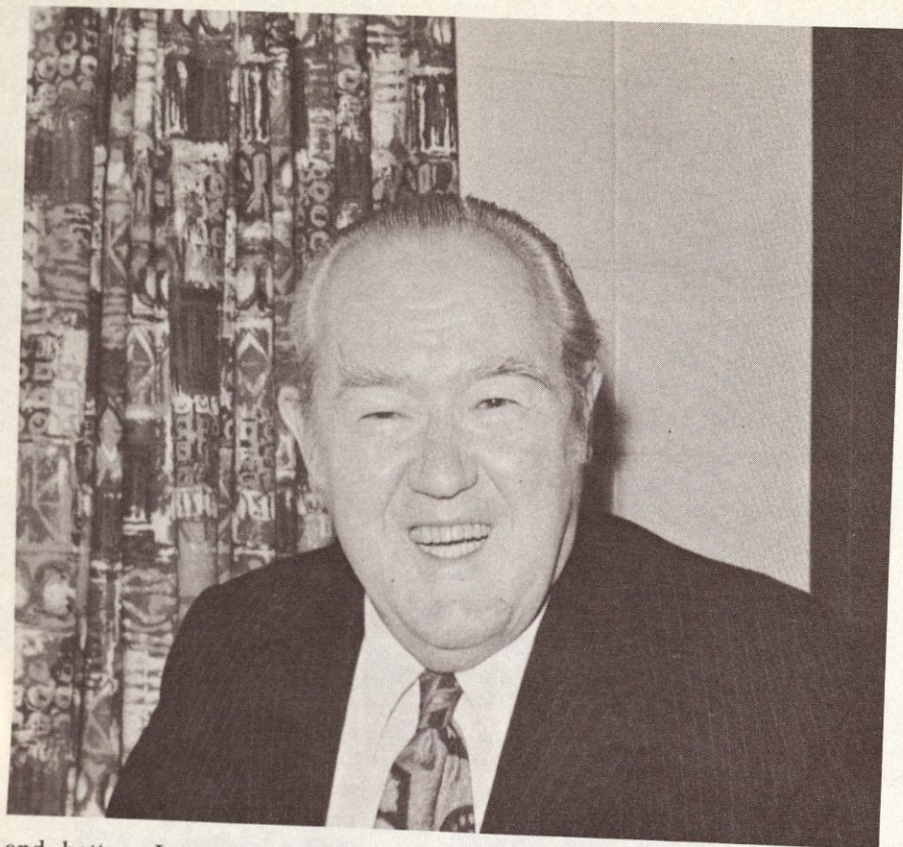
E. POWER BIGGS: Not very much. As you know, the harpsichord has blossomed again just recently and when I was at the Royal Academy in London, I don't think we were very conscious of the harpsichord. That was wrong, but that was the fact at that time. It was true all over the world. Landowska was just fighting the battle at that time. Now, they are all over. The harpsichord has come into its own once again.

HANEY: Do you recall when your interest in the harpsichord developed?

E. POWER BIGGS: As far as the harpsichord goes, I never had a harpsichord until I acquired the Challis Pedal harpsichord I now have.

HANEY: You started at the top!

E. POWER BIGGS: (laughter) Top



and bottom I guess, because of the pedals. Of course I've always loved the harpsichord. I heard Landowska play in her heyday and Danny Pinkham is a very good friend and I heard many other people play whose names you know, but it was going to Detroit to give a concert in a church that focused these experiences for me.

I dropped in on John Challis whom I had known for some time. There I found this more-or-less experimental pedal harpsichord on the floor of his studio. I tried it and thought: Gee Whiz, this is it! Up until that point I had an organ in my home. It was a small organ, only 10 ranks and it had an electropneumatic action. Despite that, it was a rather nice organ. I won't tell you who built it because as soon as I heard the pedal harpsichord, I wanted to get rid of the organ! And in its place, I wanted this Challis pedal harpsichord. There were a number of reasons for this.

You see, the harpsichord was absolutely complete. It was Challis' large model plus three stops, or choirs on the pedals, 16', 8' and 4'. It was complete. While a 10 stop organ is still a practice organ. And then there

is the vitality of it. The marvelous brightness and spriteliness of it which is natural to the harpsichord. And for me, the addition of the pedals was ideal. When you play a Bach organ toccata on a pedal harpsichord it's adding bass sonority to harpsichord brilliance.

I asked Challis if he would sell me this marvelous instrument but he wouldn't. He was going to break it up and revise it. He told me he had done a great deal of experimenting but he hadn't found it easy to voice the bass to the rest of the harpsichord. In other words, it wasn't easy to match. At first the bass tended to be rather subterranean and didn't relate with the manuals. He wanted to re-build it to correct the situation. This he did.

I don't actually know how he did it, all these tricks are his own. Perhaps different strings, voicing and so on, but anyway he made another one. I had to wait about three years for it. That was very difficult for me. It gradually came along and eventually it arrived. What a great day for me. I must say that it is the most marvelous instrument to play. For daily practice it is wonderful. It is so exacting. Every

organist ought to have one just as they did in Bach's day. Trouble is they are expensive. You are really buying two complete harpsichords.

I know there is this eternal discussion "how should one build a harpsichord; what material should be used" and so on, but for me, the Challis is ideal because I really never tune it! It just stays in tune. When I am going to record, Challis will tune it or perhaps someone from Dowd will come down and do it. Everyone is very helpful. This is true. All these harpsichord builders are really competitors but they are all extremely helpful. After it is tuned for a recording or special public performance, I absolutely don't tune it until it gets used again publicly. I don't have to.

I have a friend who has a pedal harpsichord built by Herz which is a beautiful instrument but, like other harpsichords, he has to keep tuning it. For me, I would rather begrudge that time because I'm not really a harpsichordist at all. It's terrible to speak of using the instrument as a convenience but it is that, and it is the artistic whole as well.

HANEY: *The harpsichord has such a quiet sound and the organ can be very loud. Do you find these differences in dynamics disturbing to you?*

E. POWER BIGGS: No. To begin with the Challis is not a quiet little instrument. It has a big sound and is quite rich. The harpsichord has such a marvelously complex sound. I get more of a thrill out of playing the Passacaglia on the pedal harpsichord than I do on many organs. The organ is diffuse while the harpsichord is clear.

This is just incidental, but it is very amusing to me that one of the magazines published for organists contains a harpsichord column and while they talk about various things, never once have I seen them discuss the pedal harpsichord. It seems almost as if they are afraid to let the pedal harpsichord be known. Somewhat as if it were a threat, that the pedal harpsichord might take away from organs since it is a total and complete instrument, while the practice organ

is, and always will be, just a practice organ.

HANEY: *You then recommend pedal harpsichord for organists?*

E. POWER BIGGS: It is much better than anything else . . . except a good tracker organ. Infinitely better than a little, electropneumatic practice organ. I think it is the most marvelous thing. Every organist ought to have one just as Bach did. He had three of them as we more-or-less know.

HANEY: *When you started playing pedal harpsichord, did you experience any difficulty adjusting your touch to the instrument?*

E. POWER BIGGS: It depends on how "tracker organ" your technique is. A good tracker touch is very similar to a harpsichord touch. It's this matter of breaking the egg shell, a thin egg shell of course. You have that feeling of pulling down the pallet against the wind pressure. The wind pressure of the organ is holding the pallet up and there is also a small spring of course. As soon as you break that vacuum and the wind goes through, the key immediately descends. The same with the harpsichord after the string is plucked. The harpsichord and tracker organ are exactly similar in feel whereas the average electropneumatic organ has no feel to it at all. You might as well play on a table. It's dead.

The average organ has a fairly strong spring which holds the key up and that is all. It is spring all the way. The unfortunate thing is that in many organs, the spring tension increases as the key descends which is all wrong. Now they do get around that by having a little toggle so you have the illusion of a pluck, but it is very mechanical and it gets out of adjustment. If one goes to the average church organ after playing the pedal harpsichord or a good tracker organ, it is dead as a door nail.

HANEY: *Do you give harpsichord recitals?*

E. POWER BIGGS: I have played perhaps half a dozen, but I am really not a harpsichord recitalist. I played at M.I.T. a year or two ago and I did all heretical things, the Military March

of Schubert and such. You would be surprised at what music does sound well on the pedal harpsichord. This sounds absolutely ludicrous, but one can play the Franck A Minor Chorale on the pedal harpsichord and it is absolutely beautiful. Of course, you have to keep repeating the bass notes, but the sonority, the projection and everything is wonderful. It's ridiculous, and I wouldn't do it in public but I practice these things all the time, and it's no pain. When you practice these things on the practice organ, it's just a practice organ.

HANEY: *When did you become aware that some of Bach's organ music might have been actually composed for the harpsichord?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Well, one can read that in Schweitzer, and other writings. They come up against the trio sonatas and the Passacaglia in particular and they all say that they were probably written for the pedal harpsichord or pedal clavichord. Then they drop it. They don't produce any evidence. I had read those things and hadn't thought too much about it but when I got the instrument, I immediately tried these things. What a revelation it was.

It is absolutely true that in the Passacaglia and fugue, and in the trio sonatas, Bach never writes longer than the instrument can sustain, yet in most of his other organ works, he has very long notes. So it may be that he did write these for the harpsichord or clavichord. He wrote the trio sonatas for his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, didn't he? I can't picture Wilhelm Friedemann practicing hour after hour in the church because who would do the pumping? Also, it was very cold. I believe he probably practiced most often at home and that these compositions were more or less adapted for the pedal harpsichord. Naturally they sound wonderfully well on the organ, but I personally believe they sound better on the pedal harpsichord. On the harpsichord everything is crystal clear. When you hear them on the organ you can hear the three voices but much of the time they are getting into each other's way.

The harmonics of one are cutting against the basic pitch of the other. And if you play them on three eight-foot stops on an organ they are dull. So organists start adding a four foot, and then a two foot and then a mixture. This is not necessary on the pedal harpsichord. Everything stays separate and clear and beautiful.

HANEY: *Have you played clavichord?*

E. POWER BIGGS: I would like to play clavichord but I think I would have to learn a great deal before I could really play one. The touch is so different. I do think it has a marvelous sound.

HANEY: *Do you ever play pedal harpsichord which you find during your extensive travels?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Not professionally although there are a number of pedal harpsichords in Europe. The ones I have tried are pretty skimpily made. They are obviously made to a price whereas Challis makes his forever. Speaking of the European ones, I think they are all right but you couldn't record with them. The sonority isn't rich and they have a dull and non-distinctive sound. Challis made another pedal harpsichord for Gordon Jeffery which is beautiful (Vol. II, No. 3) It is better than mine in that he has a four foot on the positive and he has several two foot choirs. It is a wonderful instrument.

HANEY: *You have pioneered in recording early organ music and pedal harpsichord music. How did you get the recording companies to accept this type of music when most companies were recording and selling music from the romantic era?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Well, it was a case of spontaneous combustion. The best break I ever had was at the Busch-Reisinger Museum in Cambridge. The installation of, first of all, an Aeolian Skinner organ. That rather intrigued James Fawcett. He used to put on the Philharmonic every Sunday afternoon. He was music director of C.B.S. Radio. It was through him that I was employed to play organ on C.B.S. every Sunday morning. The broadcasts were from the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard and I

played for those broadcasts for 16 years. These broadcasts led to several recordings on that organ. In 1959 the Skinner was sold and was replaced by the Flentrop organ from Holland. Columbia Records has recorded that instrument a number of times.

When it comes to the content of records, I come up with ideas and they come up with ideas. In a way the organ literature has been a late-comer to records. For this reason, there is a lot of material available.

We have certain assets. First of all, records have done very much for organ music and especially for historic organs which are buried in these inaccessible places. Now there is a lot of interest in organ building going back through the centuries. During my master classes I play a tape which gives examples of about 40 different historic organs in Europe beginning with the oldest organ in the world, the 1390 organ at Sion, Switzerland and going through the great organ builders of history. These include organs from 1471 and 1596, the flamboyant organs of Spain and the large organs of England and Germany. I play tapes of organs built by both Andreas and Gottfried Silberman located in Saxony and Alsace. Gottfried knew Bach so there is an interesting link there. This is very intriguing to organ students to hear the different sonorities and characteristics of organs built by the greatest builders of all time. This interest has helped with the sale of organ records since, up until recently, these famous instruments had not been recorded.

I don't want to leave out the United States. While it might be a surprise to some, the U.S.A. is not far behind in its "historic" organ tradition. The organs in Pennsylvania by the Moravian builder, David Tanenbergh, do not extend as far back in time (the late 1700's) and are not as large as European examples yet in excellence are fully their equal.

Being able to play these wonderful instruments and share their beauty through phonograph recordings is always a joy for me. To have had the privilege of recording, as I have had

recently, within the hallowed walls of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, famous throughout the world as the church of Johann Sebastian Bach, and to have felt there the spiritual presence of the master, is a high point of one's musical life hardly likely to be surpassed. This joyful experience recalled to me some words of Dr. Schweitzer in his Bach organ volumes, which made an indelible impression on me as a student at the Royal Academy in London. Schweitzer justly remarks that in studying the instrument, so closely associated with the Leipzig master, and "in setting forth the works of Johann Sebastian Bach" organists will feel that "a blessing has entered into their lives."

HANEY: *Several years ago you recorded a Columbia album called "Holiday for Harpsichord." This was one of your first harpsichord recordings. How did it come about?*

E. POWER BIGGS: When I received the Challis pedal harpsichord, people would come to listen to it. If I played the Bach Fantasy in G Minor, they thought that was very impressive. But then I noticed that if I played Schubert's "Marche Militaire" these same people would start grinning. So I put together a collection of rather unlikely pieces and we recorded them. This included Beethoven's "Turkish March"; Grieg's "Hall of the Mountain King" and even Saint Saëns "The Swan!" One can't push that kind of thing very far. Once is enough. It was just a holiday.

HANEY: *Your harpsichord recordings have introduced the pedal harpsichord to many people who would probably not know there was such an instrument.*

E. POWER BIGGS: It was more or less by chance. You must actually thank Challis. He did it. It was nothing I thought of. I had read about these pedal instruments but as soon as I sat down and played it I knew at once that it was an instrument I wanted. This was, without me knowing it, something I was waiting for.

HANEY: *Do you find organ pupils asking about harpsichords?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Yes they do. And then the curtain falls. They don't

know how wonderful it is to play, they don't know where to get one and the cost absolutely floors them. My instrument cost \$10,000 and that was many years ago. The students feel there is something there they would like to reach for but where do you get it? "Where does Challis live?" "If I write will he answer?"

It would be nice if some Zuckermann would turn out a kit of the essentials and let the student do the work. It would be wonderful. Every organist ought to get one of those.

HANEY: *Are you ever asked to play harpsichord professionally in a concert?*

E. POWER BIGGS: No. And I wouldn't if I were asked. I honestly don't know how to play it without the support of the feet. I don't know any harpsichord music. I really only play organ music on the harpsichord. I would like to play harpsichord music, but I don't know it and my schedule does not permit me enough time to study it seriously.

HANEY: *Is there any music which you haven't recorded which you would like to record on the pedal harpsichord?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Yes. I would like to do more of the Bach organ works. There are quite a number of those which take on a different aspect on the pedal harpsichord. They become different works. That's one advantage the organist has over other musicians, the vast differences in instruments. A Bach work is one thing on one organ, and another thing on another. The piano has been standardized as have the violins, horns, and I guess all instruments, while the pipe organ is almost never the same either in touch, voicing, or disposition. The change is even greater when organ music is played on the harpsichord. Bach is one thing on a big Silbermann organ with seven second reverberation and they are something else on the pedal harpsichord. They are really complimentary. It just shows how this German music can be played on anything, the kitchen table if you wish.

HANEY: *Have you made any recordings which are especially pleasing to you?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Well, I want to remake them all. When you listen to your own recordings you always find things you want to change. I am never at ease when I listen to my own recordings. Whereas I can listen to other artists recordings and enjoy every detail of them. Not my own.

HANEY: *Have you recorded any of the organ-harpsichord literature?*

E. POWER BIGGS: You mean the Soler concertos? I have recorded those with Daniel Pinkham on two organs. Of course they were originally written for two organs. I have actually seen the two organs Antonio Soler used at El Escorial outside Madrid, but there are no pipes in them. Just cases. But these concertos can be played organ-harpsichord or harpsichord-harpsichord. As a matter of fact I played the Soler 3rd Concerto with Mrs. Washington in Palo Alto, California. Her husband is a direct descendant of General Washington. She played the harpsichord and I played the organ.

HANEY: *Do you find the organ-harpsichord works difficult because of the unequal size and placement of the two instruments?*

E. POWER BIGGS: You must chose very thin and pointed registration on the organ and then it balances. The harpsichord makes a lot more sound than many people think. And the organ actually makes a lot less sound than one would think. It's quite startling when you play organ with orchestra. You soon discover that the organ just gets swallowed up by the orchestra. The organ lacks that first punch of sound that drives it through which the harpsichord does so well.

I wish there were more duo literature, and I especially wish there were more Soler concertos. I never tire of them.

HANEY: *There seem to be increasing numbers of people interested in early music and instruments. Do you think this will continue?*

E. POWER BIGGS: I think so. I think you can thank Senator Fulbright for part of that with his scholarships and then you can thank the Wright brothers for inventing the airplane. In other words, the mobility of students

is so great. Everywhere you go you find chaps who have studied in Europe on a scholarship or they got over there somehow or other which they would have never done during the steamship age. In other words, and here I am speaking of the organ, these students go over there and hear a lot of these fine old instruments and hear fine European players who are solid musicians. They hear excellent works on fine organs played by superb musicians. When they return to the United States to East Cup Cake or wherever, they jump up and down and say that they want an organ like they heard in Europe. This is happening in many colleges. That's what happened here at the University of Northern Colorado.

Now then, when it comes to the student, I think the future is somewhat questionable. Look at the fix the churches are in. You have churches like the Cathedral of St. John the Divine with banjos and bongo drums and such. Is that the thing to do? I know they want to bring the people in but is that the way to do it? Isn't it better to stand on your tradition of Tallis, Byrd, Purcell, speaking of that church. The Germans stand on their tradition of Bach. One problem that a young chap has is this. Shall he run around playing an electronic organ, maybe with colored lights in the background, and in essence "sell out" to the electronics. I dare say one can make a lot of money by hitching up with an electric "organ" company as various players are doing. But I think you demean yourself and I think you demean the great literature of the organ by doing it. That's one thing.

Then, if I get a church, how do you stand your ground musically. Every age has its problems. It is up to the individual to work it out, and fight it out if need be, with the church.

Outside the church, there are possibilities for teaching both organ and harpsichord music at the university level. This was not as readily available just a few years ago. It was rather hit or miss. When I see a student working very hard at the organ I often wonder what they are going to make of it. Where are they going to do it.

However, I do feel they have a chance if they can resist the electronics and get real instruments. Then they will be producing real music and they will have real positions, be real musicians, and be making a real contribution to the community.

HANEY: *Your career is well established and well directed, but your schedules seem physically very demanding. How do you approach or handle this part of your career?*

E. POWER BIGGS: Well, it isn't very remarkable. You just must take the time to get rested. I like practicing. I enjoy the drudgery. Probably like Challis likes the drugery of building his instruments. In the film "Remembering Stravinsky", this composer was lying on his death bed and he said he enjoyed writing music. He liked the work. After it was finished he was not terribly happy with playing or conducting it, he just liked writing. I think that is all there is to it.

I carry Emerson's poetry with me whenever I go. (He picks up a well-thumbed copy of Emerson) This is not a prop. I have a copy with me always. I'm very fond of New England. The climate is terrible, of course, but I live in Cambridge and I often go out to Concord which is just about 20 miles out, just to quietly enjoy the countryside. That whole New England of a century and a half ago was a wonderful period in American history. I have no great philosophy or magical formulae, I just enjoy working away. How lucky we are to have Bach's music. Where would we be if he hadn't had a birthday. And then too, my work takes me all over the world and things are constantly happening to keep life interesting. Let me give you an example.

Earlier I mentioned the recording I made of Bach's music in the Thomaskirche, Leipzig, which was Bach's own church. It was a wonderful experience since it was in this very building that Kuhnau played, and Telemann played, and Bach and his sons and pupils played. It was here that the St. Matthew Passion was first heard and it was here that Mozart listened to Doles and the St. Thomas

Choir perform Bach's double motet "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied." It was here that Mendelssohn played a concert of Bach's organ works which was described in glowing words by Schumann. In any event, I thought it would be interesting to play the same concert at St. Thomas Church in New York City on Fifth Avenue. That was December 22. Half way through the concert the police came in and much to the amazement of everyone, especially me, ordered everyone out of the church. It seems they had received word that a bomb had been placed

in the church and we had to evacuate at once. They didn't find a bomb but of course the concert was cancelled. I repeated the concert on March 22, the day after Bach's birthday, again in St. Thomas, but this time it was without any outside interruption.

As far as philosophy goes I think I have learned a lot from Schweitzer. He was such a huge man. He never really practiced after he was twenty-five. He went into so many other things, but his whole attitude and almost reverence for Bach was absolutely right. And, of course, he en-

joyed listening to the harpsichord as well as the organ. I will always cherish his visit to my home in Cambridge. This was back in 1949 and was Dr. Schweitzer's first trip to America. He came to Colorado to speak at the Göethe Bi-Centennial Festival and it was during this trip that he honored me with a visit to my home in Cambridge. There were about 200 guests and as we were listening to one of Schweitzer's own recordings, a stupendous and magnificent thunder storm came up. With Schweitzer's music sounding bravely inside and the storm outside, it was a memorable experience. I accompanied Dr. Schweitzer to Harvard University where he played their organs. He enjoyed playing so much we could hardly peel him off the bench for his other appointments.

One final thought about harpsichords. If you can get organists interested in the harpsichord you would have a whole new market. After all, there are 100,000 listed churches in the United States and every one of them has an organist. Think of the wave of organ voluntaries that rolls from east to west across the U.S.A. every Sunday morning. All these people are potential harpsichord lovers and buyers. Any organist should have at least a basic harpsichord. A kit instrument would be fine in the church. It is such a relief if you use harpsichord occasionally in the church service. Just recently I went to a church service in New Haven, one of those churches on the Green, and they have a nice organ but they also have a harpsichord. It was such a relief to hear the prelude to the service on the harpsichord. It was very nice. Every church should have one and every organist should have one, preferably with the pedals.

Your magazine is doing a great deal to get out the word. Incidentally, I enjoy the magazine very much. I have been subscribing for a number of years and I think you are wonderful to get it out.

HANEY: *Thank you, Mr. Biggs, for the compliment, and thank you also, for sharing your precious time, your opinions and experiences with us. ☺*



LETTERS

Dear Hal:

I am sure you will receive at least a few letters correcting my statement that H. N. Gerber was "J. S. Bach's very last pupil." (Vol. VI, No. 2, pg. 15.) Since this statement is definitely incorrect, I hope I will be the first to send in a correction. Gerber studied with Bach for approximately two years, beginning around the year 1724. This shows how very careful one must be. I almost formed a theory about the dot in the first fugue of the *WELL-TEMPERED CLAVIER*, Vol. I, on this bit of misinformation. Fortunately, I checked it out very carefully and avoided the error in time for everything except the article in *THE HARPSICHORD*. This puts me back at the beginning again, as far as the dotted note is concerned. It now seems possible that the undotted version is an early version, and that the later dotted version may have come from Bach himself. There is much more investigation to be done.

Two other errors need comment. One is the mention of an "Elshoff" edition. I must chalk this one up to my southern accent, but I really thought my German was better than that. I was referring to the "Gesellschaft" edition, meaning, of course, the famous "Bachgesellschaft" edition. Some readers may have thought I was referring to the "Landshoff" edition, which in fact does contain the same error but is nevertheless a very fine edition. The *Sinfonia No. 11* IS included in the *Clavier-Buchlein* and does clearly show the correct note instead of the "ink blot," in the sequence mentioned.

The other error is in my mentioning J. S. Bach's son, "John Philipp Emanuel." I am thankful that the name appears correctly as "Karl" instead of "John" in other places in the article. I wonder if I really made such a slip of the tongue. In any case, I accept my full share of the responsibility for these errors and hasten to make these corrections.

Willard A. Palmer
Houston, Texas

Dear Mr. Haney:

I have read your magazine on several occasions while visiting Larry G. Eckstein in West Lafayette, Indiana, while I have been assisting Philip Belt in his fortepiano shop.

The article in Volume V, number 4 on the two choir clavichord at Smithsonian has prompted me to write.

I was guide and custodian at the Claudius Collection in Copenhagen for three years and had the privilege of playing the Lindholm 1798 clavichord on a weekly basis. To my knowledge it is the only one in that collection with the 4' choir. There is, however, another clavichord with 4' by Lindholm and Söderström 1803 in the Gothenburg, Sweden Historical Museum. I also have a recollection about a Rackwitz instrument, also Swedish, with the same feature. As far as I know only the Hass 1755 in the Musikhistorisk Museum, Copenhagen has the 4' choir.

As to what it sounds like and why, I can give an answer of sorts on the basis of the Claudius instrument which has a large tone. My candid opinion is that on the large clavichords this functioned to brighten the bass and counteract the length of the bass strings. Interestingly enough, I seem to recall that the 4' was lower than the 8' strings and placed between them. If you ever go to Copenhagen you must see this instrument.

My second comment is regarding the article "Two Inventions" in the Volume I, No. 4 issue of *The Harpsichord*. I thought you might like to know that the Sterns Collection at the University of Michigan has a Tangentenflügel. As Mr. Belt may have told you, I am at present making a new catalogue of the Sterns Collection. For readers who are going near Norway, The Ringve Museum in Trondheim, Norway has some interesting keyboard instruments, including a J. A. Stein piano.

Sincerely yours
Maribel Meisel
Battle Ground, Indiana

Dear Mr. Haney:

When amateur harpsichordists like Miss Dominique Jones (Vol. V, No. 4) are asked to express their

musical tastes and opinions in your pages, some professional harpsichordists are enraged at this intrusion into their field of competence.

Curiously, these same professionals never question the space you give to amateur harpsichord builders i.e. all those who never gained an old world type apprenticeship, journeyman study and Harpsichord Master Builders degree.

In several countries the latter is a prerequisite to selling harpsichords under a more advanced consumer protection law. I am at present translating the legal requirements of study to become a Master Builder of Harpsichords from the German Federal Government Publications and this, I feel sure, will be of interest to your readers.

In the meantime, let there be space for self taught harpsichordists as well as self taught harpsichord builders in your wonderful magazine. Most of your readers surely can spot an amateur in either field.

Helga Kasimoff
Kasimoff-Blüthner Piano Co.

Dear Mr. Haney:

I hope some of your readers will wish to join in the campaign to persuade the Boy Scouts of America to establish a Harpsichord Making Merit Badge. The tentative requirements for the Merit Badge are as follows:

The applicant shall

1. have already earned the Merit Badges in Carpentry and First Aid.
2. have a basic knowledge of the history of the harpsichord.
3. assist substantially in the construction of a harpsichord OR build a working model of a harpsichord action.
4. demonstrate the ability to keep an instrument in good tune and regulation.

If enough members of the International Harpsichord Society would indicate their willingness to serve in their own localities as Harpsichord Making Merit Badge Counselors, some of the reluctance of the Boy Scout authorities to take this proposal seriously might be overcome.

Sincerely yours
John Shortridge
Harpsichord Maker
Purcellville, Virginia

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